



Will Rogers

Given by Oklahoma to the National Statuary Hall Collection

WILLIAM PENN ADAIR ROGERS WAS BORN ON November 4, 1879, in Indian Territory, near what is now Claremore, Oklahoma, and was raised on his father's ranch. In later years Rogers would proudly refer to his Indian and pioneer heritage. Preferring horses and ropes to books, he left school and went into ranching. Yearning to travel, he went to South America. Before he was 24, he had worked his way around the world as a cowhand and as a circus actor called "The Cherokee Kid."

He began his stage career in 1905 with a vaudeville act. In 1914 he joined the Ziegfeld Follies, where his commentary during his rope act gave him a start as a humorist. He went on to become a movie star, radio broadcaster, syndicated newspaper columnist, and author. From World War I until his death, his humor and wit touched the conscience of America; few men not in public office have had so great an impact upon their times. He was quietly generous with his fortune, giving large sums to charity and the victims of disasters.

Rogers established his own ranch and began to travel, especially by airplane. Though not a pilot, he was an enthusiastic spokesman for the emerging aviation industry. He and his friend, the famous aviator Wiley Post, died in a plane crash near Point Barrow, Alaska, on August 15, 1935. In breadth of sympathy, in humor, and in devotion to his country, Will Rogers has been compared to Abraham Lincoln.

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Bronze by Jo Davidson

Given in 1939; located in House connecting corridor, 2nd floor.

